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FOR WEEK OF: March 31 - April 6

GENERAL

A late season snow storm struck parts of the state on March 31, resulting in up to foot of snow in the mountains. Some farmers are looking for hay to purchase, as hay supplies are running short. Spring calf and lamb losses are higher than normal.

Temperatures: Temperatures averaged 3 to 6 degrees above normal for the week. Several locations saw afternoon highs in the low to mid 80s. Some chilly overnight temperatures occurred as well as readings in the 20s and a few teens. Daily highs ranged from the 70's and 80's. The highest reported temperature was 84 degrees at Romney and Moorefield. The lowest reported temperature was 18 degrees at Belington. The Statewide weekly average temperature was 53 degrees.

Precipitation: Precipitation was above normal. Some areas received over an inch. The Statewide weekly average precipitation was 0.91 inches.

Number of days suitable for fieldwork averaged 6.0 last week. Total acres plowed that are intended for spring planted crops were 25 percent complete compared to 33 percent in 2002 and 27 percent for the 5-yr average.

TOPSOIL MOISTURE CONDITION

	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
PERCENT				
Current Week	--	6	78	16
Last Year	2	18	66	14

Farm activities included calving, lambing, feeding livestock, purchasing and moving hay, fertilizing, cleaning debris from early spring storms and other early spring activities.

FRUIT

Adults of redbanded leafroller and spotted tentiform leafminer are beginning to emerge in apple orchards. Overwintering eggs of rosy apple aphid have hatched. Apple and peach conditions were reported in fair to good condition, with most apples at ½ inch green stage. Peaches are generally at full pink stage of development with some varieties at half bloom depending on location.

CROP AND LIVESTOCK CONDITIONS

	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Exc
PERCENT					
Cattle & Calves	--	6	41	50	3
Sheep & Lambs	--	14	40	45	1
Apples	--	--	50	50	--
Peaches	--	--	50	50	--
Hay	5	6	53	35	1
Wheat	--	1	15	84	--
Pasture	1	24	40	33	2

GRAINS

Corn was 1 percent planted, compared to 5 percent last year. Oats were 27 percent planted, compared to 20 percent last year and 13 percent for the 5-yr average. Fields were 3 percent emerged, compared to 5 percent emerged at this time last year. Winter wheat conditions ranged from poor to good, but most fields were estimated as good.

LIVESTOCK and PASTURE

Cattle condition ranged from poor to excellent, but most herds were reported in good condition. Cattle were 75 percent calved compared to 74 percent last year and 76 percent for a 5-yr average. Sheep condition ranged from poor to excellent, but most were reported in fair to good condition. Sheep were 77 percent lambled compared to 75 percent last year and 76 percent for a 5-yr average. Pasture conditions ranged from very poor to excellent, but most were reported as fair. Hay feed supplies were reported as mostly short, but ranged from very short to surplus. Feed grain supplies were reported from very short to mostly adequate.

HAY

Hay condition ranged from very poor to excellent, but most fields were reported in mostly fair condition.

TOBACCO

Tobacco was 62 percent seeded compared to 53 percent in 2002 and 55 percent seeded for the 5-yr average. The beds, including water beds, were 10 percent emerged, compared to 37 percent emerged last year and 15 percent for the 5-yr average.

HISTORICAL CROP PROGRESS

YEAR	CORN	OATS		TOBACCO		PERCENT OF TOTAL ACRES PREPARED FOR SPRING PLANTING
	PLANTED	PLANTED	EMERGED	SEEDED	EMERGED	
2003	1	27	3	62	10	25
2002	5	20	5	53	37	33
5 YR AVG	--	13	--	55	15	27

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Top Soil Moisture: (with top-soil defined as the top 6 inches):

- Very Short - Soil moisture supplies are significantly less than what is required for normal plant development. Growth has been stopped or nearly so and plants are showing visible signs of moisture stress. Under these conditions, plants will quickly suffer irreparable damage.
- Short - Soil dry. Seed germination and/or normal crop growth and development would be curtailed.
- Adequate - Soil moist. Seed germination and/or crop growth and development would be normal or unhindered.
- Surplus - Soil wet. Fields may be muddy and will generally be unable to absorb additional moisture. Young, developing crops may be yellowing from excess moisture.

Days Suitable for Fieldwork: A 'suitable' day is one where weather and field conditions allowed producers to work in fields a major portion of that day.

Crop Progress Percents: Progress percents relate to acres and should indicate the progress of field activities or crop development. Generally, an acre should be considered in or beyond a phenological stage when 50 percent or more of the plants in that acre are in or beyond that stage.

General Crop Condition:

- Very Poor - Extreme degree of loss to yield potential, complete or near crop failure. Pastures provide very little or no feed considering the time of year. Supplemental feeding is required to maintain livestock condition.
- Poor - Heavy degree of loss to yield potential which can be caused by excess soil moisture, drought, disease, etc. Pastures are providing only marginal feed for the current time of year. Some supplemental feeding is required to maintain livestock condition.
- Fair - Less than normal crop condition. Yield loss is a possibility, but the extent is unknown. Pastures are providing generally adequate feed, but still less than normal for the time of year.
- Good - Yield prospects are normal. Moisture levels are adequate and disease, insect damage, and weed pressures are minor. Pastures are providing adequate feed supplies for the current time of year.
- Excellent - Yield prospects are above normal. Crops are experiencing little or no stress. Disease, insect damage, and weed pressures are insignificant. Pastures are supplying feed in excess of what is normally expected at the current time of year.

TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION DATA FOR THE WEEK ENDING APRIL 6, 2003									
TEMPERATURE					PRECIPITATION				
STATION	HIGH	LOW	WEEKLY		WEEKS		SINCE APRIL 1st		SEASON
			AVERAGE	DEPARTURE	TOTAL	NORM	2003	2002	
-----NORTHWEST-----									
WHEELING	77	25	52		1.02		0.98	0.10	
PARKERSBURG	81	29	55	+ 5	0.68	0.84	0.65	0.13	0.84
CRESTON	82	25	53		0.54		0.52	0.13	
-----NORTHCENTRAL-----									
MORGANTOWN	79	29	55		0.96		0.91	0.24	
CLARKSBURG	79	25	52	+ 5	0.82	0.85	0.79	0.06	0.85
BELINGTON	76	18	49		0.83		0.75	0.13	
WESTON	83	25	54		0.62		0.62	0.00	
-----SOUTHWEST-----									
WILLIAMSON	82	26	56		1.54		1.54	0.00	
HUNTINGTON	82	33	57	+ 5	1.10	0.77	1.10	0.10	0.77
CHARLESTON	82	28	57	+ 6	0.92	0.77	0.92	0.31	0.77
RIPLEY	81	27	55		0.59		0.58	0.26	
-----CENTRAL-----									
TERRA ALTA	73	26	51		1.16		1.12	0.13	
ELKINS	77	24	50	+ 5	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.05	0.88
MARLINTON	75	19	45		0.94		0.92	0.03	
BECKLEY	78	22	51	+ 3	1.25	0.77	1.25	0.02	0.77
-----SOUTHERN-----									
PINEVILLE	82	28	54		1.48		1.46	0.00	
BLUEFIELD	79	23	52	+ 3	0.76	0.77	0.74	0.05	0.77
WHITE SUL SP	80	23	51		0.67		0.67	0.00	
FLAT TOP	78	22	51		1.25		1.25	0.02	
-----NORTHEASTERN-----									
MARTINSBURG	81	24	51	+ 4	0.60	0.71	0.60	0.01	0.71
ROMNEY	84	27	53		0.92		0.92	0.00	
MOOREFIELD	84	27	54		0.82		0.82	0.00	

Source: Dept. of Commerce, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service, Charleston, WV

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